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JPRS L/9686

23 April 1981

East Europe Report

POLITICAL, SOCIOLOGICAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

(FOUO 5/81)

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GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

WEST GERMAN WRITER ANALYZES CHANGES IN GDR'S GERMANY POLICY

Bonn EUROPA-ARCHIV in German Vol 36 No 1, 10 Jan 81 pp 31-38

[Article by Dr Peter Jochen Winters, member, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE editorial staff since 1968; political correspondent in West Berlin since 1972; permanent correspondent in East Berlin since 1977: "East Berlin's Change of Course Toward Bonn--On the Condition of Inner-German Relations"]

[Text] In the fall of 1980, there occurred an abrupt change in the relations between the two German states: Cooperation turned into confrontation. To be sure, the network of agreements that had been built in the last few years has proved--for the time being--to be stable (all contractual arrangements remain in force and the scheduled talks and contacts did take place); however, by raising the minimum exchange rates for visitors from the West and affirming the categorical demands vis-a-vis the Federal Government that Party leader and State Council Chairman Erich Honecker had raised in Gera, the GDR placed itself outside the operational framework of the inner-German treaty policy.

The Operational Framework of Inner-German Relations

Through the drastic increase--decreed on 9 October by the GDR Ministry of Finance--of the minimum exchange rates for GDR visitors from "nonsocialist states and West Berlin,"¹ the GDR effected--no doubt intentionally--a considerable reduction in the tourist and visitor traffic. This move affected the substance of the Federal Government's inner-German policy that had been initiated in 1969 and that aims "through negotiations on practical problems to work out arrangements that could help to improve the living conditions of the people in divided Germany"² so as to "prevent a further drifting apart of the Germans, mitigate the consequences of the division, overcome the tensions and make the overall atmosphere between the two states more tolerable."³ The level of the conversion rates was not contractually specified, but the Federal Government could justly assume that the GDR would not change these rates without prior consultation; after all, there existed a--hitherto unpublished--letter by Honecker, in which Honecker advised the Federal Chancellor of the partial revocation of the minimum conversion rates which had been doubled in November 1973--which revocation was effected as of 15 November 1974.

On 13 October 1980, Honecker stated in his Gera speech that in regard to the relations between the GDR and the Federal Republic "progress could be made only on the basis of the unqualified assumption of the existence of two sovereign, mutually independent states with different social systems."⁴ In particular, Honecker

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demanding recognition by the FRG of GDR citizenship, conversion of the permanent missions in Bonn and East Berlin into embassies, conclusion of an agreement fixing the border on the Elbe in the middle of that river and abolition of the Salzgitter Central Registration Center of the state ministries (which is concerned with registration of human rights violations in the GDR). In raising these demands, fulfillment of which was to be a precondition for the normalization of inner-German relations, Honecker placed himself outside the operational framework of the Basic Agreement between the two German states that had been signed on 21 December 1972. For in the preamble of this agreement, both sides expressly stated that they concluded the agreement "on the basis of the historical realities, irrespective of the differences of opinion...in regard to basic problems, including the national question, and guided by the wish to create--for the benefit of the people in both states--the conditions necessary for cooperation between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic."⁵ Honecker's conditions concerning the further course of the policy of detente in connection with inner-German relations actually were a demand for revision of the Basic Agreement.

A revision of the Basic Agreement is unacceptable to the Federal Republic. The demands raised by Honecker concern crucial elements of the FRG's Germany policy. In regard to the issues of GDR citizenship and conversion of the permanent missions into embassies--which would be equivalent to official, internationally binding recognition of the GDR as a foreign country--the FRG cannot comply with the GDR's wishes. The statement made by Federal Chancellor Willy Brandt in the government communique of 28 October 1969 is as valid now as it was then: "Official, internationally binding recognition of the GDR by the Federal Government is out of the question. Even though there exist two states in Germany, they do not deal with each other as foreign nations; their mutual relations must of necessity be of a special nature."⁶ Part of this special nature is the fact that so far the consequences of World War II and of the German partition have not been definitively settled. The German question remains undecided--a state of affairs illustrated by the continuance of the rights and responsibilities of the four victor powers. In the "Letter Concerning German Unity," which is addressed to the GDR Government and which is part of the Basic Agreement complex, the Federal Government pointed this out.

In the Basic Agreement, the FRG does not accord to the GDR any official, internationally binding recognition. The Basic Agreement cannot be interpreted as validation of the demand for recognition of GDR citizenship--this is brought out by the "proviso regarding citizenship problems"⁷--or of the demand for conversion of the permanent missions (whose status was determined in the Protocol of 14 March 1974⁸) into embassies or of the demand for the fixing of the border on the Elbe River by the two German governments. As regards the Elbe border, the Supplementary Protocol of the Basic Agreement merely allows the two governments to mark the dividing line between the Western zones and the Soviet zone of occupation that was established by the allied powers during the war and in the postwar period.⁹ As for areas where the course of the border is unclear or in dispute--e.g. along the stretch of the Elbe River between Schnackenburg and Lauenburg--it is only the Four Powers, whose rights and responsibilities for Germany as a whole are not affected by the Basic Agreement, that can pass a binding ruling.

As regards the problem of undivided German citizenship--which the Federal Republic must uphold by virtue of the stipulations of its constitution and the ruling of the Federal Constitutional Court on the Basic Agreement¹⁰--this issue also involves the

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status of the residents of West Berlin. German citizenship--as defined by the still valid German Nationality and Citizenship Law of 1913--is a link uniting all federal citizens, West Berlin residents and GDR citizens. The demand for recognition of GDR citizenship by the Federal Republic actually is a demand for the establishment of a special FRG citizenship, but on account of provisos of the allied powers this citizenship could not be extended to West Berlin residents; they would then have to be accorded their own citizenship and such an arrangement would make West Berlin an independent political entity, a third German state as it were.

The Inner-German Relations in a Deteriorating East-West Climate

The Federal Government was taken unawares by the GDR's change of course. But the events of October 1980, the GDR's abrupt switch from detente to delimitation, had been expected--by those who now were taken unawares--as early as the 1979/1980 turn of the year. In October 1980, there ended a state of affairs that had been called an inner-German idyll of detente in the midst of global confrontation. If the GDR's action is to be met with an appropriate response that makes allowance for the FRG's objectives in regard to its Germany policy, one must examine why the GDR changed its course only now instead of 9 months earlier.

On 12 December 1979, the NATO Council in Brussels had decided on building new American medium-range missiles and stationing them in Western Europe so as to restore the equilibrium that had been upset by the deployment of Soviet SS-20 missiles. On 26 December, the Soviet Union had launched its military intervention in Afghanistan. These two events resulted in a hardening of Soviet-American relations. Observers spoke of the end of the policy of detente. The Federal Republic supported the boycott taken by the American president, Jimmy Carter, against the Soviet Union, even though other EC countries did not join this boycott. In spite of or precisely because of this attitude of the FRG, the Soviet Union permitted the inner-German policy of detente to develop further--almost unaffected by the increasingly acerbic confrontation of the two superpowers. On 25 January 1980, Honecker addressed the first secretaries of the SED kreis [GDR administrative unit] administrations; in this speech, he accused the United States of pushing its European allies into a confrontation with the Soviet Union. The SED organ NEUES DEUTSCHLAND commented on the most interesting point of Honecker's speech: "In practice, this results in the United States exporting the Cold War to Europe and thwarting detente--a fact that can only have a negative effect on the promising relations between the GDR and the FRG."¹¹ The concept became apparent: The GDR held out the promise--with the approval and probably at the request of the Soviet Union--of continuation of the policy of inner-German detente. In doing so, the GDR hoped that the Federal Republic would in return advocate in Washington resumption of the dialog with Moscow, ratification of SALT II and above all modification or even suspension of NATO's Brussels resolution concerning supplementation of armaments.

At the end of January, after the Moscow visit of SED Politburo member Hermann Axen, the meeting between Federal Chancellor Schmidt and State Council Chairman Honecker, which was supposed to take place in the GDR at the end of February, was postponed on account of the tense international situation, but both sides issued a communique concerning the postponement, affirming their intention to hold the conference and later on to set a date agreeable to both sides.¹² In February, the GDR tried to introduce in the inner-German negotiations new projects that would have cost the

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Federal Republic millions. In a kind of last-minute panic, the GDR offered to electrify all railroad lines between Berlin and the FRG and to add a second track to all single-track lines and to let West German firms build near Leipzig a brown coal power plant, in return for which the FRG--including West Berlin--would receive electric power. State Secretary Guenter Gaus, the FRG's permanent representative in East Berlin, who conducted the negotiations, appears to have urged the Federal Government to accept these offers so as to bring as much as possible to completion before worldwide confrontation would put an end to the downright uncanny inner-German harmony in regard to detente. However, the Federal Chancellor declined, referring to the budgetary restrictions.

In spite of this rejection, SED Politburo member Guenter Mittag, the Central Committee secretary in charge of economics, visited the FRG in April. In Bonn, Mittag met with the Federal Chancellor for talks. Although the Federal Government had urged the German athletes to boycott the Moscow Olympics, on 30 April the GDR and the Federal Republic signed in East Berlin the new agreements that picked up the threads of the traffic agreements of 16 November 1978 and that like the traffic agreements could be considered "a step on the road toward normalization."¹³ The new agreements were concerned with a) the establishment of an Autobahn connection between Berlin and the Wartha/Herleshausen border-crossing point through construction and expansion of Autobahn segments in the GDR; b) the widening of a 27-kilometer-long segment of the Mittelland Canal in the GDR; c) the establishment of dual-track railroad operation between West Berlin and Helmstedt by means of expansion of two smaller track segments and modification of the DR's [GDR railroad] Berlin-Rummelsburg cleaning installation for transit trains.

In regard to these agreements, the most interesting result in regard to inner-German relations are the statements made by the two parties "in regard to the solution of certain water-related problems." The Basic Agreement had stipulated that negotiations be conducted in preparation for an environmental protection agreement; shortly after their commencement in 1973, these talks had reached a deadlock--not least owing to the establishment of the Federal Office for Environmental Protection in West Berlin. Now the two parties wanted "to try to solve individual problems already at this stage." Since September, experts of the Federal Government and of the GDR Government have been discussing measures intended to reduce the dangerously high salt level of the Werra River, which is caused by the GDR's potash mining operations. The agenda also includes measures aimed at curtailing the potash lye drainage in FRG areas close to the border and improving mine safety; the experts will also discuss problems concerning border-crossing potash mining operations. As early as May, experts of the West Berlin Senate and of the GDR Government had met in Berlin for discussions concerning Berlin water protection problems. The agreement of 30 April 1980 not only paved the way for talks with the GDR on environmental protection; it also established a so-called federal umbrella for the Berlin water protection talks.¹⁴

On 30 June and 1 July, the Federal Chancellor and the FRG Foreign Minister visited Moscow. During these talks, Brezhnev and the other Soviet leaders must have gained the impression that there was no hope of getting the Federal Republic to play an independent role in the Atlantic Alliance and above all vis-a-vis the United States. Brezhnev realized that the Federal Chancellor would not be able to persuade the Americans to ratify SALT II and that he was not even willing to suggest to the American president to modify the NATO resolutions of December 1979. The Soviet

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leadership saw that its attempt to drive a wedge between the United States and the Federal Republic had failed. The chancellor was useful to the Soviet leadership only in that he helped to resume--at least in regard to medium-range missiles--the talks with the United States that had been broken off on account of the intervention in Afghanistan.

On 11 August, upon conclusion of the Moscow Olympics, Honecker met with Brezhnev on the Crimea. According to the communique issued after the talks, Brezhnev and Honecker regarded as extremely important a conscientious attitude regarding the international agreements that had become milestones in the process of detente and in the shaping of the legal foundations of detente. In this connection, they emphasized "the necessity of strict regard for the legitimate interests of the socialist German Democratic Republic and of all other sovereign states."¹⁵ Thus they had set the tone that 2 months later recurred in Honecker's Gera speech. Even before the Crimea Conference, Bonn and East Berlin had started the preparations for the Chancellor's visit to the GDR. On 11 August, the Federal Chancellor received Honecker's official invitation to a working visit on 28 and 29 August at Werbellinsee [Lake Werbellin]; this came as a surprise to Bonn, since in the preliminary talks a 3-day visit at a Baltic Sea resort had been suggested. The preparatory talks, which were conducted by the Federal Chancellor's Office, likewise gave rise to misunderstandings, difficulties and irritation on both sides. However, in the process of drafting a communique, the FRG intimated to the GDR that the Federal Government was now prepared to discuss the large-scale projects the GDR had proposed in February.

On 21 August, the SED organ NEUES DEUTSCHLAND published an article by Colonel-General Fritz Strelitz, chief of the general staff of the National People's Army, deputy defense minister and secretary of the GDR National Defense Council headed by Honecker. The article contained--the first instance in a long time--sharp criticism of the Federal Republic, which--it claimed--had become the main NATO base in Central Europe and a champion of armament. The article also accused the FRG of upholding its "doctrine of the so-called inner-German relations" and fomenting expansion-oriented and revanchist propaganda. On the following day, 22 August, the Federal Chancellor--talking to Honecker over the telephone--canceled his GDR visit "on account of the recent developments in Europe" (i.e. the events in Poland). At this time, the Polish strikes, which had been continuing for weeks, were nearing the critical stage; at the same time, the threat of Soviet intervention was growing.¹⁶

The GDR did not immediately comment on the Federal Chancellor's cancellation. On 31 August, Honecker--visiting the exhibit of the Hoechst AG [Hoechst, Inc.] at the Leipzig Fair--actually took a fairly positive view of the inner-German relations: He stated that the GDR desired further normalization of its relations with the Federal Republic; this would help to "promote the process of detente in Europe and thus open up new perspectives regarding the cooperation between the two German states."¹⁷ However, on 5 September--in Poland the Party meanwhile had accepted the 21 demands of the strikers in Gdansk and Szczeczyn and was about to replace Party boss Edward Gierek--the GDR news agency ADN circulated the announcement that "after Schmidt's sudden cancellation of the working visit" Honecker felt it was unlikely--if only because of his own busy schedule--"that a new date would be set soon."¹⁸

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Motives Underlying the Change of Policy

One can safely assume that the abrupt change in inner-German relations that was marked by the events of 9 and 13 October was caused by more than just one factor. The change of policy vis-a-vis Bonn surely was not based exclusively on a GDR decision prompted by Honecker's real or simulated irritation about the cancellation of the chancellor's visit and the form of its announcement. Nor is there much to be said for the assumption that the raising of the minimum exchange rates--like that of 1973/74--was no more than an attempt at blackmailing the FRG and that by partially revoking that raise the GDR wanted to strike a favorable foreign exchange bargain. To obtain the consent of the Federal Government in regard to fixing also for the coming years the interest-free overdraft credit in inner-German trade (swing) at the established level of DM 850 million per year--an issue to be discussed in 1981--the GDR need not resort to blackmail, for Bonn, too, is interested in maintaining the swing at this level. Nor did the two large-scale projects desired by the GDR call for blackmail, for the GDR had practically been assured of their implementation.

More plausible than the above theories is the argument that it was on account of the events in Poland that the GDR effected the switch in its Germany policy. It is a fact that the GDR--not least owing to Soviet pressure--has sealed itself off toward the East by restricting tourist traffic to and from Poland and that vis-a-vis the Polish Communist Party it is posing as the guardian of the pure doctrine of Marxism-Leninism. But the Polish events alone are not sufficient to account for the change of course in the Germany policy. At best, these events accelerated and intensified the process of delimitation vis-a-vis Bonn. Rather, the key factor in the abrupt policy change vis-a-vis the Federal Republic appears to have been the resolve of the Soviet Union not to allow the GDR to engage in special detente maneuvers vis-a-vis the Federal Republic, after it had become apparent that the FRG was unlikely to dissociate itself from the United States. The GDR and Honecker himself were forced to discontinue their special policy of detente in Germany and to fall back into the ranks of the socialist camp, because the Soviet Union is not willing--in view of the change of leadership in the United States and the domestic difficulties resulting from the events in Poland--to take any risks in connection with special inner-German conditions. Now as before, there is great distress in Moscow in regard to all inner-German agreements and there is the fear that any community of interests between the two German states could undermine the Marxist-Leninist SED's loyalty toward Moscow.

In his Gera speech, Honecker made clear how matters stand and what Moscow and East Berlin expect of Bonn:

"As far as we are concerned, it goes without saying that our treaty policy with the FRG is an integral part of the coordinated policy of our alliance with the Warsaw Pact states--a policy oriented toward safeguarding peace. In view of the requirements of our time, it is necessary to point this out anew. No one can seriously believe that one can actively support the policy of the Western alliance, out of solidarity with the United States boycott the Moscow Olympics, pose as originator and champion of the Brussels missile resolution and at the same time convey the impression that one need do no more than talk with the GDR about relaxation of the regulations concerning tourism."¹⁹

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In this situation in which further measures against normalization in Germany cannot be ruled out, the Federal Government should stand firm and adhere to its principles. It is not the Federal Republic, but the GDR that must return to the common basis, if the normalization policy in Germany is to make further headway. In this regard, it should be noted that the inner-German relations are still part and parcel of the overall framework of East-West relations. It is only in close collaboration with the United States and the other partners in the Atlantic Alliance and in the European Community that the Federal Republic can pursue its national interests, and that means it cannot go against the given world-political trends. The GDR's change of course in its Germany policy does not signify the end of the treaty policy in Germany, but it does signal a pause. It is now imperative to show patience and at the same time to make every effort to safeguard the results that have so far been achieved.

FOOTNOTES

1. Decree of 9 October 1980 concerning implementation of an obligatory minimum exchange of currency, NEUES DEUTSCHLAND, 10 Oct 80.
2. Letter of 22 January 1970 by Federal Chancellor Willy Brandt to the chairman of the GDR Council of Ministers, Willi Stoph, reprinted in: EUROPA-ARCHIV, No 9, 1970, p D205.
3. Government Declaration of Federal Chancellor Schmidt, 17 June 1977, reprinted in: Federal Ministry for Inner-German Affairs, ed., "Zehn Jahre Deutschland-politik--Bericht und Dokumentation" [Ten Years of Germany Policy--Report and Documentation], p. 317.
4. NEUES DEUTSCHLAND, 14 Oct 80.
5. EUROPA-ARCHIV, No 1, 1973, pp D13 ff.
6. Ibid., No 21, 1969, p D500.
7. Ibid., No 1, 1973, p D17.
8. Ibid., No 24, 1974, p D573.
9. Ibid., No 1, 1973, p D15.
10. Ulrich Scheuner, "Undivided German Citizenship: A Continuing Problem of the Division of Germany," EUROPA-ARCHIV, No 12, 1979, pp 345 ff.
11. NEUES DEUTSCHLAND, 26/27 Jan 80.
12. Ibid., 31 Jan 80.
13. See Winters, "A Step on the Road Toward Normalization," EUROPA-ARCHIV, No 9, 1979, pp 269 ff.
14. See FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 2 May 80.

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15. NEUES DEUTSCHLAND, 12 Aug 80.
16. Christoph Royen, "The 'Polish Summer' of 1980," EUROPA-ARCHIV, No 24, 1980, pp 735 ff.
17. NEUES DEUTSCHLAND, 1 Sep 80.
18. Ibid., 6/7 Sep 80.
19. Ibid., 14 Oct 80.

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POLAND

HAVANA MAGAZINE INTERVIEWS EMIL WOJTASZEK ON LOCAL SITUATION

Havana BOHEMIA in Spanish 9 Jan 81 pp 72-73

[Interview with Emil Wojtaszek, candidate member of the Politburo and secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party [PZPR], by Teresa Mederos Diaz; date and place not given]

[Text] "Poland was, is and will continue to be a socialist country, a firm link in the socialist community, the friend and ally of the Soviet Union, of all socialist countries, of all national liberation movements and of all the revolutionary and progressive forces in the world.

"This has been a protest by the working masses, not against socialism, but against the breakdown of its principles; not against the people's government, but against its poor administrative methods; not against the party, but against errors in its policy.

"Neither enemy force nor the most refined methods can divert the Polish working class from the socialist path of development chosen by our country 36 years ago; nor can they weaken our fraternal ties with the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist community.

Still fresh in our minds were the words spoken to the plenary session of the Second [Cuban Communist Party] Congress by Emil Wojtaszek, chief of the Polish delegation, as we approached the place appointed for BOHEMIA's interview with the leader of that brother country. Also alive were memories of several visits to Poland, of conversations with workers and laborers in various fields, with veterans of the World War II and with men and women who had shed their own blood and fought against the German fascists. For that reason, our first questions concerned the current situation and the attempts by Western news media to distort the events which have taken place in Poland in the last few months.

[Question] Comrade Wojtaszek, the Ninth Extraordinary Congress of the Polish United Workers Party will take place in 1981. We would like to know how preparations for that congress are coming along.

[Answer] The Sixth Plenary Session of the PZPR CC [Central Committee] decided to call the Ninth Extraordinary Congress of the PZPR, and the Seventh Plenary Session of the

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CC resolved to set the date between the end of the first quarter and beginning of the second quarter of 1981.

The ninth congress will make a detailed evaluation of the situation, determine the goals to be achieved by the party and take a position with regard to the experiences and the character of the restoration which is taking place. The determination of that process, since it is a restoration process, implies a return to the basic values of socialism, as well as a restoration of the ideological values of Leninist principles in the life of our party. Why have we called the extraordinary party congress?

This decision and the resolution were influenced by events occurring in Poland toward the end of last year. The first secretary of our party, Comrade Stanislaw Kania, evaluated them as follows in his speech to the Sixth Plenary Session of the PZPR Central Committee: "This has been a protest by the working masses, not against socialism, but against the breakdown of its principles; not against the people's government, but against its poor administrative methods; not against the party, but against errors in its policy."

To begin the work of the congress we have established a preparatory committee representing the basic social and professional groups of workers. The committee has already begun to work toward drawing up, by January, the proposed documents for the ninth congress and particularly the theme of the program, as well as plans for changes in the laws. The committee will use in its work all proposals presented by the party organizations and requests from party members at all levels and from workers in general in all sectors. The work of the congress committee will be to draw up the political and ideological platform which will permit a stepped-up campaign of ideological and educational activity, as well as reinforce cohesion in the party rank and file.

In the party congress we want to present, among other things, some guidelines for socialist democracy, internal strengthening of the party and improvement of the methods by which the government functions and of all the links in the state apparatus, for now and for the future. The most important problem, basically, is to strengthen the governing role of the party in our society.

[Question] Let us touch upon another subject. The Western news media have insisted on distorting the internal situation in your country in the last few months. What can you tell us about this?

[Answer] It is true that Western propaganda recently has given great notoriety to the events in Poland. The voices of alarm or of open catastrophe in the bourgeois mass communications media have caused us some concern. They distort the picture and inspire our enemies. Behind the smokescreen of "the Polish problem" and of the alleged "Soviet threat" the spokesmen for the cold war and the interests of the military industrial complex are seeking an opportunity to achieve their objectives, the realization of which, up to now, has encountered serious obstacles as a result of the position of detente taken by most of the countries of Western Europe.

I am thinking in particular of the aspirations of those forces to stall the talks on disarmament, postpone definitively the possible ratification of the SALT II Treaty, to obtain an increase in armaments budgets in the NATO member countries and to install new types of nuclear weapons and missiles in Western Europe, as well as to bring about greater subordination to NATO.

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Thus, then, the campaign unleashed in the West around "the Polish problem" must be treated as an attempt to distract international public attention from the real causes of the present antisocialist and anti-Soviet escalation in Europe as well as in the rest of the world.

Part of the Western press is trying to present the events in Poland as a movement against socialism. Actually, with its many mass demonstrations, our working class is expressing its unbreakable union with socialism and its support for our alliances within the framework of the socialist community. Neither enemy force, nor even the most refined methods are able to divert the Polish working class from the socialist path of development chosen by our country 36 years ago, nor can they weaken our fraternal ties with the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist community.

[Question] The Polish United Workers Party and the government have adopted several decisions to solve the difficult internal problems of the country. What has resulted from those decisions?

[Answer] During the Sixth Plenary Session, the Central Committee made a very necessary study and formulated decisions to allow the country to emerge from the crisis in accordance with the hopes and sentiments of most of the party members and of the participants. The Central Committee adopted the political line needed to emerge from the crisis and begin the restoration process. As I said earlier, we adopted very energetic actions to strengthen the party, to step up its campaign and to improve its political and organizational capabilities and the efficiency of its ideological and educational work.

The party consultations which have been held at various levels throughout the country give you an idea of the way the party has mobilized to achieve those objectives. Also, as a result of party recommendations, the government has adopted a series of measures in the social and economic sphere. The work on basic economic reform is proceeding very rapidly. The government is establishing a 3-year plan for stabilization, and in January the economic reform plan will be submitted to a general discussion among the people, after which it will be debated in the Sejm (parliament).

In addition, some changes have been introduced in the 1981 plan and in the 5-year plan which begins this year--changes which are consistent in view of the new situation, with a more just distribution of resources. On this basis the investment program has been limited, particularly in the area of big investments which require large amounts of capital and long periods in which to get under way. Priority has been given to production for agricultural development, food and housing construction.

In addition, we have agreed to improve the effectiveness and the role of the Sejm in accordance with its constitutional rights. Other important changes concern the work of the local representative organs.

Once again we want to emphasize and repeat what we said at your Second Congress: "Poland was, is and will continue to be a socialist country, a firm link in the socialist community, the friend and ally of the Soviet Union, of all socialist countries, of national liberation movements and of all the revolutionary and progressive forces of the world.

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Emil Wojtaszek spoke briefly about his country's foreign policy, reaffirming its full support of the agreements of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty, which met in Warsaw last May, as well as of the results of the meeting between the high-ranking leaders of the signatory members of the Warsaw Pact held in Moscow at the beginning of December.

Emil Wojtaszek was minister of foreign affairs when he came to Cuba a few years ago. Today, by decision of the Central Committee, he is a candidate member of the Politburo and secretary of the PZPR Central Committee. We recall his impressions of our country as he expressed them to BOHEMIA on that last visit, and we repeat them here:

"I am very happy to have had the honor of participating in the Second Congress of the fraternal Cuban Communist Party. It is not only an important event in the life of your party and of the Cuban people, but also it has great importance for the entire communist and international workers movement and for all the progressive forces of the world.

"The Second Congress has demonstrated the political and ideological force and the organizational capabilities of the vanguard of the Cuban working class, the Cuban Communist Party. It has proved also that your country is a strong and steady detachment of the international communist movement; it is an example of dedication to the cause of international solidarity.

"I take this opportunity to transmit, on behalf of our delegation, our thanks for the cordial welcome and hospitality we have found at every turn. Our visit to the Casablanca shipyard, where we met directly with our [as published] self-sacrificing working class, made an unforgettable impression on us.

"In closing, I should like, on behalf of the leadership of the Polish United Workers Party, to extend to our brother party, the Cuban Communist Party, and to the Cuban people our best wishes for new success in the work of strengthening the building of socialism in your beautiful and heroic country."

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